

Portland
Observer
Opinion

Remember April 17th is deadline for
tax returns - 2 extra days
from Uncle Sam

Articles do not
necessarily reflect or
represent the views of
The Portland Observer

Letter to the editor

Dear Editor:
After the flurry of words, misstatements, and targeted innuendoes, I find it necessary to respond to the concerns of your readers regarding the case of little Elian Gonzalez. I wish to provide clarity to my position and allow others - who may not understand the passionate resolve surrounding this issue - a factual context in which to continue the debate regarding Cuban and United States relations.

As a Cuban-American who left the shores of communist Cuba at the age of 6, I can wholeheartedly relate to the fears and trepidations of Cubans now living in the United States. I know firsthand of the horrors of Castro's communist regime. It is not enough to say that Cuba is a communist country that would not do justice to the atrocities that befall the captives of Cuba's shores. It is not enough to say that the government of Cuba does not believe in God or allow its people to speak freely; it is not enough to say that the government completely controls the allotment of food and medicine.

It is necessary to convey the horrors of living in a country where your very existence is determined by the whim and will of a vicious dictator. For example Castro blatantly violated all international laws when he ordered his military to shoot down two unarmed civilian planes with United States citizens on board. This same dictator sank a Cuban tugboat named "The 13th of March" - which was filled with women and children. Why? Those women and children wanted to escape communist oppression. Sadly enough, the bodies of those women and young children have never been recovered from the depths of Cuban waters where they remain to this day. Tens of thousands have thrown themselves into the unforgiving Florida Straits to reach the shores of freedom. Thousands have died trying.

Why would people attempt to build vessels unworthy of the sea from worn inner tubes, rotting wood and frayed ropes? Why would they set out with little or no food to make such a journey? Why would mothers board these doomed vessels with their children to make the ninety-mile, shark-infested trip, while being exposed to harsh and unforgiving elements? Why? The only answer is FREEDOM.

It may be hard for some to understand some Cuban American's passion about the issues surrounding Elian. But to those of us who have lived the nightmare of Castro and survived, the thought of sending a vulnerable six-year old back to the clutches of such an unforgiving dictator is unimaginable. As a Cuban American, my reaction and response to the Elian Gonzales case is grounded in my knowledge that this young boy will never have a chance at a real life if he is returned to Castro. The Cuban government's constitution clearly states that all minors are wards of the state, and the "state" is Castro. Even as a parent in Cuba, you do not have full authority over your own child.

It is my personal opinion that Elian must be allowed to exhaust ALL of his legal remedies and be afforded the rights guaranteed by the Due Process Clause of the United States Constitution. It goes without saying that the same rights we fight for little Elian should be extended to all immigrants who risk their lives for freedom. This includes Haitians and all other immigrants who board rickety boats - filled to capacity - to flee political oppression. They also deserve a chance at liberty and independence. The underlying issue is that America offers what many around the world dream of - a chance to live in a country where opportunities abound with the harmonic sounds of freedom.

As the Mayor of the city of Miami, I can assure it's residents and visitors that local law enforcement - while not being involved in the actual extraction of Elian from a home he has grown to love - will work actively to maintain law and order. Demonstrators will be allowed to peacefully protest or celebrate the final outcome of the negotiations, thereby utilizing their constitutional right to freedom of speech. This will be conducted in a non-violent fashion.

Finally, it is my deepest desire that this issue be a catalyst for dialogue between the varying communities throughout America and not a widening wedge between the masses. The only way we can understand the plight of others is if we allow ourselves to be open to their pain. Let us remember, the enemy is not on our shores. The enemy is Castro, the dictator of Cuba.

Joe Carollo
Mayor, City of Miami

**Call goes out for republicans
to do some Spring cleaning**

CONTRIBUTED COLUMN
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Democratic National Committee (DNC) National Chair Joe Andrew and DNC Vice Chair Lottie Shackelford applauded Faye M. Anderson for her courage in resigning from the Republican Party. An African American journalist, Anderson denounced the Republican Party's failure to fight intolerance in recent months. "Just as Ms. Anderson urged the Republican Party to air out their 'big tent,' I would challenge the leadership of the Republican

National Committee to address the complaints contained in her letter," said Shackelford. "Why didn't Bush apologize to African Americans for his visit to Bob Jones University, a school that banned interracial dating? Where was the RNC when its presidential candidate, George W. Bush, tacitly endorsed the flying of the Confederate flag above South Carolina's state capitol? She deserves answers to those questions."

Faye Anderson announced her disassociation from the Republican Party earlier this week. In her web column she wrote, "Truth be told, the Republican Party left me sometime

ago. My switch comes in the wake of a pattern of racial blunders that I cannot dismiss as mere 'mistakes,'" [PoliticallyBlack.com, 3/28/00]

"The Democratic Party is committed to fighting discrimination. While Ms. Anderson may not choose to affiliate herself with a major party at this time, we welcome her. The American people know that the Democratic Party is the Party of inclusion," said DNC National Chair Joe Andrew. Visit the DNC's Web Site at www.democrats.org

**Bush, GOP must cease actions
that threaten accurate census**

STATEMENT BY
EM CAUCUS CHAIR MARTIN FROST
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

"Census 2000 has been many years and billions of dollars in the making, but its success is now squarely in the hands of the American people. Earlier Congressional Democrats gathered to urge all Americans to return their census forms immediately.

"Unfortunately, Republicans in Congress - as well as Gov. George W. Bush - have recklessly endangered our efforts to count all Americans by

attacking the census while it is taking place. Sadly, this is only the latest example of Republican opposition to efforts to ensure that all Americans - regardless of race, ethnicity or economic status - are counted.

"The 1990 census missed millions of Americans - disproportionately minorities, children and the poor. As a result, those communities did not get their fair share of political representation and resources for priorities like schools, hospitals and highways.

"While nonpartisan scientists, civil

rights groups, Democrats and the professionals at the Census Bureau have worked to ensure this does not happen again, GOP leaders have fought us at every turn. GOP leaders Newt Gingrich and Jim Nicholson have even admitted that they believe an accurate census that counts all Americans threatens their political power.

"It is time for Gov. Bush and other GOP leaders to put America's interests ahead of their partisan interests - and to stop their reckless campaign to undermine the census."

Have the world brought
to you
in your own home,
come visit us on the web at
www.portlandobserver.com

The
Portland
Observer

USPS 959-680

Established 1970

STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF,

PUBLISHER

Charles H. Washington

EDITOR

Larry J. Jackson, Sr.

BUSINESS MANAGER

Gary Ann Taylor

COPY EDITOR

Joy Ramos

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Shawn Strahan

4747 NE Martin Luther King,
Jr. Blvd.

Portland, OR 97211

503-288-0033

Fax 503-288-0015

e-mail

news@portlandobserver.com

subscription@portlandobserver.com

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to

Portland Observer

PO Box 3137

Portland, OR 97208

Periodical Postage
paid in Portland, OR

Subscriptions are
\$60.00 per year

DEADLINES

FOR ALL SUBMITTED MATERIALS:

ARTICLES:

Monday by 5 P.M.

ADS:

Friday by noon

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1996 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

The Portland Observer - Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication - is a member of the National Newspaper Association - Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association - Serving Portland and Vancouver.

SAFEGWAY FOOD & DRUG

Spring Savings Spectacular!

Look For Your Safeway Weekly Shopping Guide

In Your Oregonian FOODday in the Portland Metro Area...and save more by shopping at Safeway.

SAFEGWAY CLUB

Visit Safeway's Web site at www.safeway.com

PRICES EFFECTIVE APRIL 12 (APRIL 18 2000)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			12	13	14	15
16	17	18				

Manor House individually quick frozen. Sold in 4-lb. bags only, \$6.76 ea. **SAVE up to 78¢ lb.**

Boneless Skinless Fryer Breasts **1.69 lb.** Safeway Club Price

Safeway 5-Dozen Eggs Large grade AA. Limit 1. **2.98** Safeway Club Price

Juicy Sweet Cantaloupes Whole melons. Grown in Mexico. **.29 lb.** Safeway Club Price

Now the savings are in the Card!